

Hobbies

For once, it's not your fault if money just slips right through your hands

By Roger Boye

The Federal Reserve system has released to commercial banks some \$1 and \$5 bills that seemingly flake away.

Government printers made the flaky money with bad ink produced in Virginia by a private company under contract with the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

"We had used some of the ink before we realized it was a problem," said Ira Polikoff, a bureau spokesman. "We're now testing [freshly printed] notes daily to avoid a problem."

So far, the bureau has received reports of the flaking ink from the Federal Reserve banks of Atlanta, Cleveland and Dallas, and some of the bills have entered circulation.

The problem affects the black ink on the front side of a limited number of \$1 and \$5 Federal Reserve notes, series 1988, and

possibly some \$20s. The green serial numbers, Treasury seal and black Federal Reserve seal are normal, as is each bill's back side.

A flaky dollar in uncirculated condition eventually might retail for as much as \$50 on the hobby market, based on prices paid for bills with other types of printing errors.



U. S. Mint officials are using a toll-free telephone number—800-832-5300, extension 157—to accept orders for 1990-dated silver dollars commemorating the 100th birthday of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

During the pre-issue sale this month, an uncirculated dollar costs \$23 and a proof specimen, \$25. Starting March 1, selected banks and retailers will sell the coins at the regular price of \$26 uncirculated and \$29 proof.

Each coin contains .77 of an ounce of silver. The dollar likely

will be Uncle Sam's only commemorative coin program of 1990 and the seventh such program since 1982.

Meanwhile, sales of three types of 1989-dated coins honoring the bicentennial of the U. S. Congress remain far below production limits.

As of Dec. 31, officials had sold 1.9 million Congress coins of the gold, silver and copper-nickel issues. Federal law requires that the U. S. Mint make no more than eight million Congress coins and that the program end on June 30.

Part of the profits from coin sales will help pay for improvements to the U. S. Capitol.



Australia's "nugget"—a gold bullion coin available in the United States—might be jumping to higher sales in 1990.

The .999-fine gold piece will depict a red kangaroo this year rather than the gold nuggets that

had been featured since the coin made its debut in 1987.

Investors bought about 250,000 troy ounces of investment-grade nuggets in 1988,

compared with 1.2 million troy ounces for the market-leading Canadian maple leaf and nearly 700,000 troy ounces for the U. S. American Eagle.